

RETAIL PRICES - SEPTEMBER QUARTER, 1951.All Items - "C" Series.

Index numbers of retail prices of all items ("C" Series) - with the weighted average of the six capital cities in 1923-1927 as base of 1000 - for the September quarter, 1951, with figures for June quarter, 1951, for comparison (in brackets), were:- Brisbane, 1796 (1698); Toowoomba, 1821 (1705); Rockhampton, 1819 (1739); Townsville, 1861 (1752); Bundaberg, 1792 (1706); and Warwick, 1800 (1696).

The rise in prices in Brisbane in the September quarter, 1951 (as measured by the "C" Series Index Number) was 5.8 per cent., which was a little greater than the increase in the preceding quarter (5.3 per cent.) and was the greatest rise ever recorded in one quarter. Food and grocery items were the principal factor contributing to the large rise. These rose in cost by 9.3 per cent., the nearest previous approach to this level being 5.8 per cent. in the March quarter of 1948. Clothing and footwear prices increased by only 4.3 per cent. in the most recent quarter, compared with 9.7 per cent. in the June quarter, and 2.5 and 4.5 per cent. respectively in the corresponding (September) quarters of 1950 and 1949. Miscellaneous items, which include household drapery, hardware, fuel, and fares, rose in cost by 5.1 per cent. during the September quarter, 1951. This rise, though relatively large, had been exceeded in one earlier quarter - March, 1951 - when the increase was 8.3 per cent. Over the twelve months ended with the September quarter of 1951, rises in various sections of the index were:- food and groceries, 25.4 per cent.; clothing and footwear, 23.8 per cent.; miscellaneous items, 19.6 per cent.

The latest increase brought the total rise in the "C" Series Index for the twelve months ended September, 1951, to 21.2 per cent., compared with 8.7 per cent. for the corresponding period twelve months earlier.

Price rises in the September quarter, 1951, were higher than for Brisbane in Toowoomba, Townsville, and Warwick, and lower in Rockhampton and Bundaberg. In spite of such variations from quarter to quarter, all six cities have shown very similar rises in the average level of all retail prices compared with their pre-war level. Rises in the "C" Series Index from the year 1938-39 to September quarter, 1951, ranged from 104.1 per cent. in Townsville to 119.0 per cent. in Warwick. In spite of its lower total increase, Townsville still has the highest costs of any of the six towns.

The indexes show the following increases when compared with those for the periods shown.

Retail Price Index, "C" Series, Percentage Increases, September Quarter, 1951.

City.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From September Quarter, 1950.	From June Quarter, 1951.
	%	%	%
Brisbane	108.1	21.2	5.8
Toowoomba	114.0	21.7	6.8
Rockhampton	111.3	21.5	4.6
Townsville	104.1	21.8	6.2
Bundaberg	113.1	21.8	5.0
Warwick	119.0	22.1	6.1

Food and groceries, clothing and footwear, and the miscellaneous group of items comprising household drapery and hardware, fuel, light, fares, etc., have shown the following percentage changes during the last quarter and since 1938-39.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increases, September Quarter, 1951.

City.	Food and Groceries.		Clothing and Footwear.		Miscellaneous Items.	
	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1951.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1951.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1951.
Brisbane ..	115.8	9.3	236.2	4.3	71.5	5.1
Toowoomba ..	133.9	10.6	234.5	5.7	69.2	6.3
Rockhampton ..	115.7	7.2	229.9	3.4	75.5	4.2
Townsville ..	109.0	11.7	232.6	3.3	75.8	4.2
Bundaberg ..	111.4	7.7	238.4	3.8	71.1	4.7
Warwick ..	129.7	9.7	233.5	4.2	70.0	6.2

Food and Groceries.

During the recent quarter, increases recorded in food and grocery prices ranged from 7.2 per cent. in Rockhampton to 11.7 per cent. in Townsville. The rise of 9.3 per cent. in Brisbane was by far the highest quarterly rise on record for that city, the next highest being 5.8 per cent. in March quarter of 1948. Considerable increases were recorded in the prices of onions, sugar, butter, potatoes, milk, bread, jam, eggs, and meat.

1/- 1/- 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ 3 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ 1 $\frac{1}{2}$

Rent (4 and 5 Roomed Houses).

Bacon 4 $\frac{1}{2}$

The rent index increased by 0.5 per cent. in Brisbane and 0.4 per cent. in Rockhampton, but remained stationary in the other four cities covered by the survey.

Clothing and Footwear.

The increase of 4.3 per cent. in clothing and footwear prices in Brisbane during the quarter under review, although considerably less than the record rise of 9.7 per cent. in the June quarter of this year, has been exceeded on only eight occasions since the outbreak of war in 1939.

Miscellaneous Items.

The miscellaneous items index increased by 5.1 per cent. in Brisbane during the September quarter. This was the second largest quarterly increase in this index on record, and was due chiefly to higher prices of household drapery and firewood, and to increased fares.

Comparison of Costs in Queensland Cities.

The following table shows the amounts, for the various Queensland cities, required, in September quarter, 1951, to purchase the quantity of goods or housing which would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Amounts Required in Various Cities to Purchase Equivalent of £1 in Brisbane.

City.	All Items.			Food and Groceries.			Rent (4 and 5 Rooms).			Clothing and Footwear.			Miscellaneous Items.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Brisbane ..	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Toowoomba ..	1	0	3 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	19	10 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	4 $\frac{3}{4}$	
Rockhampton ..	1	0	3	1	0	11	18	2 $\frac{1}{2}$		1	0	0	1	0	9 $\frac{3}{4}$
Townsville ..	1	0	8 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	1	7 $\frac{1}{4}$	18	9 $\frac{3}{4}$		1	0	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	6
Bundaberg ..	19	11 $\frac{1}{2}$		1	0	8	15	5 $\frac{1}{4}$		1	0	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	9 $\frac{1}{2}$
Warwick ..	1	0	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	16	8 $\frac{1}{4}$		19	9		1	0	10 $\frac{1}{2}$

In relation to Brisbane prices, the cost of all items together increased during the quarter in Toowoomba, Townsville, and Warwick, but decreased in Rockhampton and Bundaberg. The largest movement recorded since the previous quarter was in Rockhampton, where the price of goods costing £1 in Brisbane decreased from £1 0s. 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. in June quarter to £1 0s. 3d. in September quarter.

In comparison with Brisbane, prices of food and groceries decreased in Rockhampton and Bundaberg during the quarter, but increased in the other three cities for which data are collected.

Prices of clothing and footwear came nearer to Brisbane prices in Toowoomba, Townsville, and Bundaberg. In Warwick, prices of these items retained the same relativity to Brisbane as in June quarter, while the level of these prices in Rockhampton was the same as that prevailing in Brisbane.

Miscellaneous items increased in price, in relation to Brisbane, in Toowoomba and Warwick, but decreased in the other three cities for which the index is calculated.

State Basic Wage Rates in Various Cities.

The first column of the following table shows, for the September quarter of 1951, the retail price index number ("C" Series) for Brisbane, for four of the other principal cities of Queensland for which figures are available, and for the other five capital cities of Australia. The next two columns show the basic wage rates, for males and females, as prescribed by the appropriate State industrial authorities, for each city at the middle of the September quarter, 1951. These are followed by columns showing the amounts which would have been required in Brisbane to provide a standard of real purchasing power equivalent to that provided by the respective State basic wages in each of the cities shown. The differences between these amounts and the actual State basic wage rates for Brisbane, as shown in the final columns, show the margin of advantage in purchasing power enjoyed by Brisbane basic wage earners over basic wage earners in each of the other cities. Minus (-) figures in the last columns indicate that the local basic wage in a particular city provided a higher level of real purchasing power than the Brisbane basic wage had in Brisbane. As usual, Townsville had the highest basic wage in terms of real purchasing power, both for males and females, of any of the other cities of the State for which index numbers are available. The higher cost of living in Townsville was not enough to offset the "parity" added to the basic wage in the North.

Comparison of Purchasing Powers of Basic Wages of State Industrial Authorities,

September Quarter, 1951.

City.	Retail Price Index ("C" Series), 3rd Qtr., 1951.	Basic Wage at 15.8.51.		Equivalent of Local Basic Wage at Brisbane Prices.		Extra Purchasing Power of Brisbane Basic Wage.	
		Males		Females		Males	
		s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Brisbane ..	1796	8 15 0	5 16 0	8 15 0	5 16 0	-	-
Toowoomba	1821	8 15 0	5 16 0	8 12 7	5 14 5	2 5	1 7
Rockhampton	1819	8 15 0	5 16 0	8 12 9	5 14 6	2 3	1 6
Townsville	1861	9 5 0	6 1 0	8 18 6	5 16 9	-3 6	-0 9
Bundaberg	1792	8 15 0	5 16 0	8 15 5	5 16 3	-0 5	-0 3
Sydney ..	2007	9 13 0	7 4 6	8 12 9	6 9 4	2 3	-13 4
Melbourne	1930	9 9 0 ^a	7 2 0 ^a	8 15 11	6 12 2	-0 11	-16 2
Adelaide ..	1894	9 4 0	6 18 0	8 14 6	6 10 10	0 6	-14 10
Perth ..	1911	9 16 8	5 11 1	9 4 10	5 4 5	-9 10	11 7
Hobart ..	1931	9 7 0 ^a	7 0 0 ^a	8 13 11	6 10 3	1 1	-14 3

^a No State wage is declared. As the Commonwealth rate is followed to a large extent, Commonwealth rates are shown.

Commonwealth and State Basic Wage Rates.

Following the publication of the index numbers for the September quarter, 1951, the basic wage rates of the Commonwealth Court were automatically adjusted from 1st November, 1951. The new rates and the amounts of adjustments are shown in the next table, together with the latest basic wage rates for males and females declared by the various State industrial authorities, and the dates from which they operated.

Basic Wage Rates, December Quarter, 1951.

Capital City.	Commonwealth Basic Wage.			State Basic Wage.							
				Increase on Previous Rate.	Males.			Females.			Date of Operation.
	Males. ^a				Males.			Females.			
	£	s.	d.	s. d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	
Brisbane ..	9	5	0	10 0	9	5	0	6	3	0	29.10.51
Sydney ..	10	7	0	14 0	10	7	0	7	15	0	1.11.51
Melbourne ..	9	19	0	10 0	(9	19	0)	a			(1.11.51) ^b
Adelaide ..	9	15	0	11 0	9	15	0	7	6	0	1.11.51
Perth ..	9	17	0	9 0	10	5	8	5	16	3	22.10.51
Hobart ..	9	19	0	12 0	(9	19	0)	a			(1.11.51) ^b

^a The female rates are 75 per cent. of the male rates.

^b No State wage declared, but rate shown is that of Commonwealth Court which is followed to a large extent.

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BRISBANE.

14th November, 1951.

males		Males	Females
f.o.d.		f.o.d.	f.o.d.

Table No. 1 - The "All Items" Retail Prices Index - "C" Series.
 (Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended Sept., 1951.	Quarter Ended -					
				Sept., 1950.	Decr., 1950.	March, 1951.	June, 1951.	Sept., 1951.	
Brisbane	863	1079	1663	1482	1546	1612	1698	1796
Toowoomba	851	1092	1678	1496	1562	1623	1705	1821
Rockhampton	861	1084	1692	1497	1577	1631	1739	1819
Townsville	912	1119	1715	1528	1595	1651	1752	1861
Bundaberg	841	1059	1663	1471	1548	1607	1706	1792
Weighted Average									
Five Towns	864	1082	1670	1487	1553	1616	1706	1804
Warwick	822	1073	1655	1474	1533	1591	1696	1800

Table No. 2 - Food and Groceries Retail Prices Index.
 (Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended Sept., 1951.	Quarter Ended -					
				Sept., 1950.	Decr., 1950.	March, 1951.	June, 1951.	Sept., 1951.	
Brisbane	856	971	1675	1473	1551	1610	1690	1847
Toowoomba	814	1010	1710	1486	1574	1640	1722	1904
Rockhampton	895	1012	1779	1529	1658	1725	1801	1931
Townsville	955	1057	1780	1568	1635	1700	1787	1996
Bundaberg	903	1027	1756	1517	1639	1701	1773	1909
Weighted Average									
Five Towns	864	984	1694	1485	1568	1629	1709	1869
Warwick	846	1000	1734	1491	1577	1642	1772	1943

Table No. 3 - Clothing and Footwear Retail Prices Index.
 (Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended Sept., 1951.	Quarter Ended -					
				Sept., 1950.	Decr., 1950.	March, 1951.	June, 1951.	Sept., 1951.	
Brisbane	829	1454	2563	2251	2355	2436	2673	2787
Toowoomba	829	1429	2535	2244	2338	2404	2623	2773
Rockhampton	845	1477	2558	2256	2347	2401	2696	2788
Townsville	840	1457	2579	2260	2379	2437	2704	2794
Bundaberg	839	1447	2595	2264	2376	2431	2735	2839
Weighted Average									
Five Towns	831	1454	2563	2252	2356	2431	2675	2788
Warwick	825	1441	2526	2229	2312	2400	2640	2751